

20th

CENTURY masters

THE BEST OF
BILLY RAY CYRUS

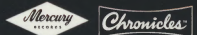
The Millennium Collection





1. Achy Breaky Heart
2. Some Gave All
3. Could've Been Me
4. She's Not Cryin' Anymore
5. Wher'm I Gonna Live?
6. In The Heart Of A Woman
7. Somebody New
8. Words By Heart
9. It's All The Same To Me
10. Busy Man

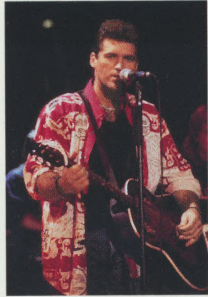
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Billy Ray Cyrus aptly describes his life in the early '90s as a “rocket ride.”

His profile shot high, seemingly overnight, while he was still fronting a bar band. And it plunged only long enough for him to digest the backlash that often accompanies such astounding success. His premier single, “Achy Breaky Heart,” released in April, 1992, became one of those rarities in that it not only was a #1 country hit and a Top 5 pop hit, but also the single actually sold copies. Three months after its release it was certified platinum. His Bob Seger/Bruce Springsteen-esque vocals were causing a stir that country music had never quite seen before, and, in fact, reaction was so outrageous that some were convinced the pandemonium he caused was staged. None of it was make believe however, although it was surreal to a young new artist whose roots were planted firmly in Kentucky soil; while his debut album *Some Gave All* broke all records, it held the No.1 (country and pop) spot for 17 weeks.

Cyrus was born in Flatwoods, Kentucky, to a gospel-singing mom and a music-loving father who was a state legislator in one of the most poverty-stricken sections of eastern Kentucky. Cyrus had big dreams early on. Initially he thought he'd be a baseball player, but between his fiddling grandpa and his grandma's insistence that he perform, music seemed to take over. On Sundays, he would stand at the front of the Pentecostal Church where his other grandfather was the pastor, and sing old standard hymns and gospel songs. By the age of five, Cyrus was performing with his father's gospel quartet, the Crownsmen. The true commitment, however, didn't come until he was 20 years old. Cyrus still remembers the crossroads: “I took my catcher's mitt and set it up on a shelf. I listened to my intuition to the point that I drove to a

music store and bought me a guitar and decided I was starting a band. I wrote on a piece of paper that night "I'm going to be a successful singer/songwriter/entertainer. My music will be heard around the world, and through my music and my life, I will be able to touch people's lives." However, his plans took some time.

He formed a local band called Sly Dog after his one-eyed pet bulldog, and took up residence in an Ironton, Ohio bar called Changes. In 1984, when the bar burned down, along with the band's equipment, Cyrus took it as a sign that it was time to re-locate. For two years he sold cars in Los Angeles' San Fernando Valley, finally returning to Kentucky, and reforming Sly Dog which landed a job as house band at the Ragtime Lounge in Huntington, West Virginia. That year, in 1986, Cyrus married a local girl, but the relationship suffered from Cyrus' devotion to his career. He played five or six nights at the Ragtime and on his days off, he would drive down to Nashville to knock on doors. Just about the time he got a break opening for a Reba McEntire show in Louisville, his marriage fell apart. He signed his first record contract at the beginning of 1991, but came home one night to find all of his belongings on the lawn outside his house. The experience paved the way for the most country-treated selection on this collection, "Wher'm I Gonna Live?"

"I got divorced, lost my house and lost my cat," Cyrus recalls of that mixed period in his life which began with the recording of another one of his own compositions, "Some Gave All" (in January of that year). "One of my Phys Ed. teachers in high school left for Vietnam and came back with only half of his legs," Cyrus recalls of the inspiration behind the song. "To this day, that's something that's burned inside my mind and something that has impacted my life. I didn't know as a kid I would end up writing a song like "Some Gave All."

In June of '91, Cyrus recorded "Achy Breaky Heart" and eight other tracks for his landmark first album, *Some Gave All*. Then I got back into my car and drove to the Ragtime Lounge in Huntington, West Virginia where I kicked back into the first set on a Wednesday night," Cyrus remembers. By September, he was causing such commotion that fights were breaking out in the bar. "I was such a big fish in a tiny jar," Cyrus says. "I kept telling the record guys, 'I'm going to get killed up there. You guys don't understand – people think I have

made it, and my God, I haven't." To the bar folks he had already, and the rest of the world wasn't far behind.

In April, 1992, "Achy Breaky Heart" was released, a line dance was created, and the song topped the charts for five weeks. Among other accolades, it would soon be recognized as the Country Music Association's "Single of the Year." By June, the song "Some Gave All," having been performed for 100,000 people at a Memorial Day observance, became a veterans' anthem, while "Could've Been Me" climbed the charts to No. 2. "Wher'm I Gonna Live" was released to lesser notice in the fall, but "She's Not Cryin' Anymore" became the album's fourth hit at the beginning of '93. The album had taken on a life of its own.

"It was the realness of that album that made it so special," Cyrus reflects. "I had worked over ten years writing those songs for that album, playing those bars and honing my craft night after night. When I finally got a record deal, I got to put my heart and soul on vinyl." For Cyrus, the outrageous success of "Achy Breaky Heart" was both a blessing and a curse. Because it was looked upon as more of a novelty song, the quality of the artist's other material and the passion of his vocals have often been overlooked. While 1994's "Storm In The Heartland," also the poignant title track of his third album, addressed the flood ravaged American midwest, and should have made a greater impact, Cyrus was fighting his own ongoing battle for the musical respect his work deserved. Still, the artist wouldn't have it any other way.

"I was living in my car before that song came out, so I wouldn't trade that song for anything," he says, adamantly. "To this day, the fans have stayed with us and been there and a lot of it has been because of the magnitude of that song. It created something that has taken a long time to get passed, but I love the song and won't ever quit playing it."

Robyn Flans
January 2003

Compilation Produced by Mike Ragogna
96k/24-bit Mastered by Elliott Federman @
SAJE Sound – New York, NY
Production Coordination: Adam Abrams
Editorial Assistance: Barry Korkin
Licensing: Kelly Martinez and Scott Ravine
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Photo Research: Ryan Null and Erica Irwin
Photos: Cover, booklet back cover & credits page:
Peter Nash; Liner notes (left panel, background) &
inlay: Dean Dixon; CD tray: Fotex/Hoffman/Shooting Star

Also Available by Billy Ray Cyrus:
Some Gave All (314 510 635-2/4)
Best Of: Cover To Cover (314 534 837-2)
Shot Full Of Love (314 558 347-2)

The Best Of...20th Century Masters/
The Millennium Collections Also Available:

George Strait (088 170 280-2)
George Jones (088 170 110-2/4)
Tom T. Hall (088 170 126-2/4)
Toby Keith (088 170 351-2)
Sammy Kershaw (088 170 365-2)
Flatt & Scruggs (088 170 187-2)
Ernest Tubb (088 112 118-2)
Loretta Lynn Vol. 1 (MCAC/D-70106)
Loretta Lynn Vol. 2 (088 170 215-2)
Mark Chesnut (088 170 246-2)
The Mavericks (088 170 229-2)
Merle Haggard (088 112 110-2/4)
Nanci Griffith (088 170 191-2)
Oak Ridge Boys (088 170 150-2)
Waylon Jennings (088 170 139-2)



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- Achy Breaky Heart**
(Don Von Tress)
Mercury single 866522
Country #1 / charted 4-4-92
Pop #4 / charted 5-9-92
Produced by Joe Scaife & Jim Cotton
from the album *Some Gave All*
- Some Gave All**
(Billy Ray Cyrus – Cindy Cyrus)
Mercury single 862094
Country #52 / charted 4-24-93
Produced by Joe Scaife & Jim Cotton
from the album *Some Gave All*
- Could've Been Me**
(Reed Nielsen – Monty Powell)
Mercury single 866998
Country #2 / charted 7-4-92
Pop #72 / charted 10-10-92
Produced by Joe Scaife & Jim Cotton
from the album *Some Gave All*
- She's Not Cryin' Anymore**
(Billy Ray Cyrus – Terry Shelton – Buddy Cannon)
Mercury single 864778
Country #6 / charted 9-5-92
Pop #70 / charted 3-13-93
Produced by Joe Scaife & Jim Cotton
from the album *Some Gave All*
- Wher'm I Gonna Live?**
(Billy Ray Cyrus – Cindy Cyrus)
Mercury single 864502
Country #23 / charted 10-17-92
Produced by Joe Scaife & Jim Cotton
from the album *Some Gave All*
- In The Heart Of A Woman**
(Keith Hinton – Brett Cartwright)
Mercury single 862448
Country #3 / charted 7-3-93
Pop #76 / charted 7-31-93
Produced by Joe Scaife & Jim Cotton
from the album *It Won't Be The Last*
- Somebody New**
(Alex Harvey – Mike Curtis)
Mercury single 862754
Country #9 / charted 10-23-93
Pop #71 / charted 1-8-94
Produced by Joe Scaife & Jim Cotton
from the album *It Won't Be The Last*
- Words By Heart**
(Reed Nielsen – Monty Powell)
Mercury single 858132
Country #12 / charted 1-29-94
Pop #119 / charted 4-2-94
Produced by Joe Scaife & Jim Cotton
from the album *It Won't Be The Last*
- It's All The Same To Me**
(Kerry Kurt Phillips – Jerry Laseter)
Mercury single 574638
Country #19 / charted 5-31-97
Produced by Keith Stegall & John Kelton
from *The Best Of Billy Ray Cyrus: Cover To Cover*
- Busy Man**
(Bob Regan – George Teren)
Mercury single 566582
Country #3 / charted 10-31-98
Pop #46 / charted 1-23-99
Produced by John Kelton & Keith Stegall
from the album *Shot Full Of Love*

All *Billboard* chart information courtesy of Joel Whitburn's *Top Country Singles*.



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CENTURY MASTERS | The Millennium Collection

BILLY RAY CYRUS

